

Track team dominates — 1B
 New Farmers Market — 3A
 Bark in the Park — 6A

photo by Peggy Von Bargaen
 Incoming clouds light up the sky over
 Bohemia Park. A storm system brought a
 beautiful cloudscape Friday evening, fol-
 lowed by thunder, lightning and lots of rain.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Attention: Memorial Day means an early Sentinel deadline for the June 1 edition. Submitted materials will be due by noon on Thursday, May 26.

Committee approves City budget

Positions added for nuisance abatement, police operations; water rate increases continue

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A 14-member committee gathered last week to help guide the City of Cottage Grove's financial future for the next year, and the committee will recommend that the 2016-17 budget it approved be adopted by the City Council at an upcoming meeting. Below are some of the highlights of next year's budget:

Overview

The Budget Committee, which consists of Cottage Grove's Mayor, City Council and seven citizen volunteers, met Tuesday, May 10 and again Thursday for meetings of three and two hours, respectively. As the meeting began, City Manager Richard Meyers told the group about a change of format that would work to ensure that the budget be reviewed adequately.

"The change is the result of people's concerns last year that the Committee hadn't had a chance to review the budget in full," Meyers said. "This process almost takes away your ability to pass the budget in one night."

The committee listened to comment from the audience during a public hearing, much of which concerned community promotions that sought funding in this year's budget. It then recessed briefly and opened a worksession that lasted until the end of Tuesday's meeting. The worksession continued a line-by-line review of the budget on Thursday. The change came about after a disagreement among members of the 2015 committee about a hurried adoption of the budget last year.

In his budget message, Meyers said that the \$28,641,115 budget represents an increase from last year, largely in the City's spending from its reserves, which are amassed to pay for capital projects such as the effort to expand the irrigation system that discharges effluent from the wastewater treatment plant onto Middlefield Golf Course instead of pumping it directly into the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

Meyers pointed out that, like most operations, the City's largest expenditures involve paying personnel, and he stated that cost increases in the Public Employees

Please see **BUDGET**, Page 11A



Sentinel file photo

The Kwikie building has been shuttered since 2007, but the City hopes it will soon be filled.

Kwikie building may have a buyer, city says

Occupant long sought for jobs that could be brought to town

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Officials with the City of Cottage Grove say that a commercial building the City has been trying to fill for some time may have a buyer.

Late last week, Community Development Director Howard Schesser said the City had been contacted by a company in search of zoning information for the Kwi-

kee building, an 80,000 square foot hulk of a structure on the east end of town in which stairs for the entrances of recreational vehicles were manufactured until the company closed up in 2007.

The City has sought a new owner, in addition to the jobs that a new occupant could provide for the Kwikie building ever since, listing the search as its highest priority for filling a commercial building.

Please see **KWIKIE**, Page 11A

Playing catch-up

Staggered start, added assistance, preschools aim to help get Kinder students started

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The second year of full-day kindergarten at South Lane School District will feature a staggered start for the District's youngest students, in addition to more help for teachers in each kindergarten classroom. The District also plans to establish preschools based at two area elementary schools to help prepare them for school.

The Oregon legislature mandated a full day of kindergarten for students in all school districts beginning in 2015, and according to administrators and teachers at South Lane, the transition from a half-day of instruction was not a smooth one.

"After this year, we noticed some hiccups in supporting all of our kids properly," said South Lane Special Services Director Chad Hamilton.

Hamilton said administrators have been meeting with kindergar-



photo by Jon Stinnett

Harrison Elementary teacher Amy Swearengen reads to her class Monday. It is hoped that more classroom assistance and a staggered start this fall will help ease kindergarteners' transitions to school.

ten teachers throughout the year to tackle both the behavioral and academic challenges brought on by a full-day schedule, and it was decided that kindergarten students will still come to school for a half-day throughout September this year, basically a three-week window before they start full-time in October.

The move to full-day kindergar-

ten was a welcome one, Hamilton said, as preparedness assessments in basic math and reading for kids entering school at South Lane rank the District among the lowest in Lane County, and a full day of kindergarten was seen as necessary to help students catch up.

"Kids coming in are, on average, less skilled than in other districts," he said.

A Preschool Promise grant that will fund the establishment of preschools at Bohemia Elementary and Dorena School aims to help draw area students even with their peers, and at the Monday, May 9 meeting of the School District's Budget Committee, South Lane

Please see **KINDER**, Page 11A

Gowings headed to D.C. on 10-day veterans' awareness ride

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

By the time many readers pick up their copy of this week's Cottage Grove Sentinel, Jeff and Celia Gowing should be on the open road atop their motorcycles, headed about as far east as it's possible to ride.

On Monday, the Gowings departed for Auburn, Calif., where they will rendezvous with other members of the National Veterans Awareness Organization for its annual ride, a 10-day trip across the country to Washington, D.C. that includes stops at eight Veterans Association hospitals and several schools. Their

ride starts Wednesday, and they'll be meeting up with four riders from Roseburg, in addition to friends that Jeff Gowing, himself a U.S. Army veteran and a current Cottage Grove City Councilor, met on previous rides in 2009 and 2010.

Back in 2010, the Gowings rode for two days of the 10-day trip, and they said that saying goodbye without making it to D.C. was the hardest part of the journey. Celia Gowing will be making her first cross-country ride this year.

"I'm nervous," she said. "When I'm back safely, it'll be great. It's going to be quite an adventure, though we are con-

cerned about the weather out east. I won't ride in any thunderstorms."

Jeff Gowing said he first visited a V.A. hospital in Reno, Nev., adding that he may have been the only company that the veteran he visited there had seen all year.

"The ride is about bringing awareness to the veterans, to remind them that people are thinking about them," he said. This year, the Gowings will be taking several notes from Lincoln Middle School students to deliver to the veterans they encounter along the way. They'll be eating many of their meals at American Legion and Veterans

of Foreign Wars posts, where volunteers will host and serve them.

When they arrive at their destination, the Gowings will also take part in the Rolling Thunder Run, a ride that draws upwards of 500,000 riders to the nation's capitol each Memorial Day weekend and aims to "educate, facilitate and never forget by means of a demonstration for service members that were abandoned after the Vietnam War," according to its website.

The Gowings expect to return to Cottage Grove on June 10, and they have promised to share details of their ride with the Sentinel when they get home.



photo by K. Michael Roberts

Celia and Jeff Gowing will depart Wednesday for a 10-day ride to Washington, D.C.

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WEATHER

Sunny

HIGH 72 LOW 46

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1 Dollar